MTC convict hanged in prison

KARACHI, Dec 31: The first death sentence ordered by a military court this month was carried out on Thursday, prison officials said. Ashraf Chakar, 30, who was condemned to death for killing a police constable, was hanged in Karachi jail.

Presiding officer Lt-Col Razzaq Zia awarded capital punishment to Ashraf Chakar, on the charge of killing a constable Mohammad Siddique of Chakiwara police station on May 13.

His appeal was turned down by the military appellate court a week ago. Ashraf was arrested by the police on June 24 from a nearby locality of Lyari. He had dual nationality of Pakistan and Iran and was alleged to have connections with local drug dealers and criminals.

He was the first convict after the military courts were set up in Sindh under Article 245 of the Constitution on Dec 5. His other accomplices, Usman Ghani, Abdul Jalil, and Nisar were awarded 10 years rigorous imprisonment by the military trial court No. 3. However, the military court pardoned Nisar and rejected the appeal of others.

The military courts have sentenced six people to death so far and imprisoned eight for crimes including murder, kidnapping and gang-rape. The courts began sitting on Dec 5.

Officials said Chakar, sentenced to death on Dec 16, was executed at 6.30am amid tight security around the jail after a military court rejected his appeal three days ago. A heavy police contingent was deployed outside the jail to prevent any untoward incident. No one was allowed to enter the jail premises by the authorities.

His body was handed over to Edhi Welfare Trust for burial as no-one claimed it.

However, according to officials his body was handed over to one of his cousins.

None of the press people were allowed to witness the hanging, however they were informed about it later. The condemned man's uncles and cousins met him last night and again in the early morning before the execution. — AFP/APP/PPI